

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SYDNEY 1741

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINR, AS
SUBJ: PARRAMATTA FEDERAL PARLIAMENTARY BY-ELECTION

REF: SYDNEY A-113

IN A BACKGROUND BRIEFING SESSION WITH JOHN DUCKER,
ASSISTANT SECRETARY, LABOR COUNCIL OF NEW SOUTH
WALES, HE MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS ABOUT THE
SEPT 22 FEDERAL BY-ELECTION TO REPLACE
RESIGNED NIGEL BOWEN:

1. THE PREMATURE ANNOUNCEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER
WHITLAM ENDORSING HARRY JENSEN FOR PRE-SELECTION
AS THE ALP CANDIDATE WAS A CASE OF "GOUGH SHOOTING
FROM HIS HIP" AND THE PRIME MINISTER HAD NOT CONSULTED
EITHER PEOPLE IN THE DISTRICT OR MEMBERS OF THE PARTY
BEFORE MAKING THIS ANNOUNCEMENT. DUCKER SAID THAT
IT MADE THE PRIME MINISTER LOOK RATHER FOOLISH.

2. HARRY JENSEN IS NO "GLAMOR CANDIDATE" AS THE PRIME
MINISTER HAD DESCRIBED HIM. HE WOULD NOT BE ADEQUATE
AS A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT NOR WAS HE PHYSICALLY ABLE
TO PARTICIPATE IN A TOUGH CAMPAIGN.

3. MICHAEL WHELAN, WHO CAME WITHIN A FEW
VOTES OF BEATING NIGEL BOWEN IN THE LAST FEDERAL
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ELECTION HAS SUFFERED IN EYES OF PARTY PEOPLE WHO

FEEL HE LET THEM DOWN DURING THE LAST THREE WEEKS OF THE CAMPAIGN. DUCKER BELIEVES THEY HAVE WHELAN TALKED INTO AGREEING THAT THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD DO THE CHOOSING OF THE CANDIDATE, WITH PERHAPS A SUSPICION ON WHELAN'S PART THAT HE WOULD BE CHOSEN.

4. THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE PARTY LEADERSHIP ARE STILL LOOKING FOR AN OUTSTANDING CHARISMATIC CANDIDATE TO RUN IN THIS BY-ELECTION.

5. DUCKER IS OF THE OPINION THAT ALTHOUGH THE LIBERALS ALSO ARE HAVING A DIFFICULT TIME IN CHOOSING A CANDIDATE, THE LABOR PARTY PROBABLY WILL NOT WIN THIS ELECTION BECAUSE THEY DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH CAMPAIGN MONEY, THE NEW FEDERAL BUDGET WILL BE A "TOUGH BUDGET" WHICH WILL NOT APPEAL TO THE MIDDLE CLASS WORKERS IN THE PARRAMATTA AREA, AND THE AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AND BUSINESS INTERESTS WILL POUR AS MUCH AS \$500,000 INTO THE CAMPAIGN ON THE LIBERAL'S SIDE. ALTHOUGH THE UNIONS WILL PROVIDE THE LABOR CANDIDATE WITH SOME MONEY, IT WILL NOT COME NEAR MATCHING THE MONEY AVAILABLE TO THE LIBERAL CANDIDATE.

6. DUCKER BELIEVES LIBERALS COULD BENEFIT BY EXPLOITING CONSIDERABLE UNDERCURRENT OF OPINION THAT THE LABOR GOVERNMENT HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH AND NOW IS THE TIME TO HOLD BACK ON GIVING ANY NEW ENCOURAGEMENT. HE ALSO TENDS TO AGREE WITH THE MAXIMILLIAN WALSH ARGUMENT THAT THE GOVERNMENT SUPPORT USUALLY FADES IN BY-ELECTIONS. HANNAH

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